

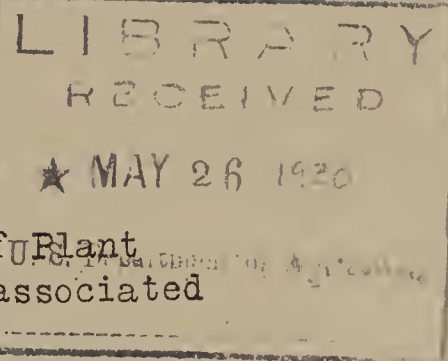
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THE GARDEN CALENDAR



A radio talk by W. R. Beattie, horticulturist, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered through Station WRC and 34 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, May 13, 1930.

That reference of mine a short time ago to my boyhood experience in picking potato bugs struck a responsive chord in the memory of a Massachusetts member of the Farm and Home Hour family. This good lady says in her letter that I didn't have much on them on picking potato bugs for they received 5 cents a quart, but that they first nearly filled the measure with fine grass then a fat layer of bugs on top. That is the way they fooled grandfather, who allowed them to dump the bugs on a small bonfire. Dead potato bugs tell no tales, but not so with beans.

Speaking of beans, I am reminded of a story I read in my younger days about a boy whose father left him at home to plant beans in the cornfield. The day was hot and the bag of beans didn't grow lighter as fast as this boy thought it should, so by and by at the lower end of the field by the fence he found a large flat stone; lifting the stone he dug a hole with his hoe and dumped most of the beans into it, covering them with earth and replacing the stone. There is an old saying that "murder will out," and so it was in this case, because every bean sprouted and grew from under the stone, and unhappily for the boy the "beans were spilled."

On my father's farm was a cornfield, and in the center of that field an old family graveyard in which many of the old fashioned slab tombstones had fallen. Of course, I never went near that graveyard at night, but was braver in daytime, and it so happened that my father went away for a day and left me to plant cornfield beans wherever the hills of corn were missing. Going up and down the rows and planting the beans with a hoe, I reached the graveyard along about noon then remembered the story about the boy who buried the beans under a flat stone. The bag of beans was still heavy, so creeping through the fence into the graveyard, I lifted one of the fallen gravestones, made a hole under it, poured the remainder of the beans into it, and carefully replaced the stone. I thought I had safely covered my tracks, but lo and behold, about the time the corn was the roasting-ear stage, I again visited that corn field, but this time in company with my father, and as fate would have it, our walk took us past the graveyard. As we approached, a shrill whistle heralded the presence of a woodchuck or groundhog. My father went to investigate, and his line of investigation led him straight to that fallen tombstone under which I had buried the beans, and also under which Johnny Chuck had later made his home. The presence of a quantity of beans growing in the soil that the woodchuck had thrown from under the tombstone evidently puzzled my father, that is, it did for a time, but the grim truth gradually dawned upon him. I leave it to your imagination as to what happened to me.

But some of you are doubtless saying, what has this to do with the garden calendar. Just this, there is a great difference in beans and for that matter all garden seeds. Gardeners everywhere are finding it decidedly to their advantage to arrange far in advance of planting time for a supply of the best seeds obtainable, a year in advance is none too long for some

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kinds. I have been planting beans and other seeds in my garden this year, and while some have grown perfectly, others have been a complete failure. The greatest disappointment, however, is to plant the seeds, grow the plants to maturity, and then find that they are not the kind you thought you were getting. I am not inclined to condemn the seedsmen; I believe that most of them are doing their best to supply us with good seeds. I know gardeners, however, who are growing and saving certain kinds of seeds for their own use, and are getting good results.

Take parsnips, for instance, if the seed is old or hasn't been properly ripened, it will not grow. One gardener told me just a day or two ago that he saved his own parsnip seed last year, and that he believed it must have grown about 200 per cent, judging from the stand of plants that he has. It requires great care to grow good garden seeds, but I do believe that some of you would find it to your advantage to go back to your grandmother's methods of saving certain garden seeds for your own planting.

This whole subject of "vegetable seeds for the home and market garden," is covered at some length in Farmers' Bulletin No. 1-3-9-0. This bulletin was written by Dr. W. W. Tracy, Sr., who for 30 years during the earlier part of his life was engaged in the seed business, and during the latter years of his life was head of the Testing Gardens of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The bulletin has recently been revised by Dr. D. N. Shoemaker of the Bureau of Plant Industry, and it contains a great deal of useful information for anyone who contemplates growing vegetable seeds for his own use. You can get a copy by writing to the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture or in care of the station through which you are listening. It is Farmers' Bulletin No. 1-3-9-0, "Vegetable Seeds for the Home and Market Garden."